



The Sustainability Toolkit: 10 Steps to Maintaining Your Community Improvements

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Agenda

- Overview of 10 step process
- Tips and stories from work with communities throughout the country
- Resources and tools
- Question and answer/discussion

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Sustainability Toolkit



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Step 1: Create a Shared Understanding of Sustainability

- Definition – Sustainability can lead to continued health and quality of life benefits in a community
- Focus on community improvement **outcomes** vs. program or agency continuation
- Can also be sustained through policy change or capacity building

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Step 2: Position Your Effort to Increase Your Sustainability Odds

- Factors that influence the likelihood community improvements will be sustained
- Can work on this step from beginning, through implementation

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Step 3: Create a Plan to Work Through the Process

- Who needs to be involved?
- How long will it take?
- What is the commitment of individuals involved?

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Step 4: Look at Current Picture and Pending Items

- Have a clear picture of what activities or efforts will be included in sustainability discussion
- Pending items – anything that will impact continuation of one of your efforts

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Step 5: Develop Criteria to Help Determine What to Continue

- What questions do you need to have answered to help you decide what to continue?
- Pick the 3-5 most important criteria
- Answer those questions for each activity/effort listed in Step 4

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Types of Criteria

- Impact
- Resources Needed; Who Will Carry Out Effort
- Broad Community Support
- Still a Need

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Role of Evaluation

- Consider sustainability when planning evaluation
- Select sustainability criteria in beginning and set up data collection systems
- Ensure use of evaluation findings in sustainability decision-making

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Step 6: Decide What to Continue and Prioritize

- Which efforts/activities should be continued – prioritize
- Criteria results help with decisions
- Difficult step – neutral facilitator recommended
- Assist with transitions (e.g., clients, employees)

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Step 7: Create Options for Maintaining Your Priority Efforts

- What results have we achieved that justify continuing this effort?
- To whom is this effort important (or who benefits) and do we have their commitment to finding resources (not necessarily money) for this effort?
- What cost effectiveness, cost savings or other financial justification can we document?

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Step 7 (cont.)

- What resources (financial and other) are needed to continue?
- What are some possible sources of resources for continuing this effort?

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Role of Marketing

- Assistance with marketing is helpful
- Helps nurture program champions and allies
- Educates regarding policy changes
- If people don't know who you are and what you're doing, why should they care whether the work continues?

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Role of Program Champions/Allies

- Who should be an ally?
- People with fiscal and policy decision-making authority
- Community voices

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Role of Earned Income

- Increasing interest in, and use of, earned income strategies among nonprofits
- Numerous options exist
- Individuals with a business background are key to the pursuit of earned income strategies

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Role of Infrastructure Improvements

- Enhance likelihood of sustainability
- Infrastructure such as strong financial systems, well-trained staff, strong leadership, engaged board and well-maintained technology

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Step 8: Develop a Sustainability Plan

2 Items:

- Action Plan – Who does what by when?
- Marketing Piece – Help get the word out about what you need

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Sustainability Plan

- Who we are (history)
- What we've accomplished (outcomes)
- What we want to continue (Step 6)
- What we need to continue them (Be specific – not just money)
- 1 piece of paper, double-sided

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Step 9: Implement Your Sustainability Plan

- Implement action plan
- Get the word out (marketing, networking)
- Be flexible!
- Celebrate successes
- Get additional support

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Step 10: Evaluate Your Outcomes and Revise as Needed

- What did we want to continue?
- Is it continuing?
- Revise plan if needed

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Upcoming Trainings

- Several trainings to be offered to program personnel and Network staff, state-wide
- Expect further information on trainings from the Network in the next few months

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Questions???

Thanks!!!

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